



# Federal Student Aid At a Glance



## WHO gets federal student aid?

Our most basic eligibility requirements are that you must

- Demonstrate financial need.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen with a valid Social Security Number.
- Show by one of the following means that you're qualified to obtain a postsecondary education:
  - Have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate.
  - Pass an approved ability-to-benefit (ATB) test (if you don't have a diploma or GED, a school can administer a test to determine whether you can benefit from the education offered at that school).
  - Meet other standards your state establishes that we have approved.
  - Complete a high school education in a home school setting approved under state law.

## WHAT is federal student aid?

It's financial help if you're enrolled in an eligible program as a regular student at a school participating in our federal student aid programs. (By "school," we mean a four-year or two-year public or private educational institution, a career school or a trade school.)

Federal aid covers school expenses, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid can also help pay for a computer and for dependent care.

There are three categories of federal student aid: grants, work-study and loans (see the chart below for an overview of these programs). Check with your school to find out which programs your school participates in.

## HOW do you apply for federal student aid?

1. Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA)—the online version (*FAFSA on the Web*) or the paper FAFSA.
  - For *FAFSA on the Web*, go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) (or to [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) and get general student aid information as well). Using *FAFSA on the Web* is faster and easier than using paper.

- If you don't have Internet access, you can get a paper FAFSA from
  - a high school guidance office,
  - a college financial aid office,
  - a local public library, or
  - our Federal Student Aid Information Center, by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

**You can apply beginning January 1, 2005; you have until June 30, 2006 to submit your FAFSA. But, you need to apply early!** Schools and states often use FAFSA information to award nonfederal aid. Their deadlines are usually early in the year. You can find state deadlines online at *FAFSA on the Web*—see "Check Deadlines" under "Before Beginning a FAFSA." The paper FAFSA lists state deadlines on the front of the form. Check with the schools you're interested in for their deadlines.

### 2. Review your *Student Aid Report* (SAR).

After you apply, you'll receive a Student Aid Report. Your SAR contains the information reported on your FAFSA and usually includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number. The EFC, a measure of your family's financial strength, is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR information as soon as you get it and make any corrections or changes, if necessary. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data electronically. Schools not listed on your FAFSA must receive your complete, correct SAR data by your last day of enrollment or by September 15, 2006, whichever comes first.

### 3. Contact the school(s) you might attend.

Make sure the financial aid office at each school you're interested in has all the information needed to determine your eligibility. If you're eligible, each school's aid administrator will send you an award letter outlining the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the school will offer you. You can compare award letters from the schools you applied to and see what aid you can receive from each school.

## Federal Student Aid At a Glance, continued

<b>Federal Student Aid Program</b>	<b>Type of Aid</b>	<b>Program Details</b>	<b>Annual Award Amounts</b>
<b>Federal Pell Grant</b>	Grant: does not have to be repaid	Available almost exclusively to undergraduates; all eligible students will receive the Federal Pell Grant amounts they qualify for	\$400 to \$4,050 for 2004-05; 2005-06 amount will depend on program funding.
<b>Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)</b>	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; priority is given to Federal Pell Grant recipients; funds depend on availability at school	\$100 to \$4,000
<b>Federal Work-Study</b>	Money is earned while attending school; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; program encourages community service work and work related to course work. Jobs can be on campus or off campus; students are paid at least minimum wage.	No annual minimum or maximum award amounts
<b>Federal Perkins Loan</b>	Loan: must be repaid	Loans at 5% interest for both undergraduate and graduate students; payment is owed to the school that made the loan	\$4,000 maximum for undergraduate students; \$6,000 maximum for graduate students; no minimum award amount
<b>Subsidized FFEL<sup>1</sup> or Direct<sup>2</sup> Stafford Loan</b>	Loan: must be repaid; must be at least a half-time student	Subsidized: U.S. Department of Education pays interest while borrower is in school and during grace and deferment periods; must demonstrate financial need	\$2,625 to \$8,500, depending on grade level
<b>Unsubsidized FFEL<sup>1</sup> or Direct<sup>2</sup> Stafford Loan</b>	Loan: must be repaid; must be at least a half-time student	Unsubsidized: Borrower is responsible for interest during life of the loan; financial need not a requirement	\$2,625 to \$18,500, depending on grade level (includes any subsidized amounts received for the same period)
<b>FFEL<sup>1</sup> or Direct<sup>2</sup> PLUS Loan</b>	Loan: must be repaid	Available to parents of dependent undergraduate students enrolled at least half time	Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid the student receives; no minimum award amount

<sup>1</sup>This type of Stafford Loan is from the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. The loan is known as a FFEL (or Federal) Stafford Loan.

<sup>2</sup>This type of Stafford Loan is from the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. The loan is known as a Direct Loan.